

## Be Prepared in Case Your Child Becomes Missing

Take the 6 steps listed below to be prepared.

- ① Keep a complete **description** of your child on hand
- ② Take color **photographs** of your child every six months
- ③ Have your dentist prepare and maintain **dental charts** for your child, and be sure they are updated each time an examination or dental work is performed
- ④ Know where your child's **medical records** are located
- ⑤ Arrange with your local law-enforcement agency to have your child fingerprinted and keep the **fingerprints** in a safe and easily accessible place
- ⑥ Keep a **DNA** sample from your child, like an old toothbrush in a brown envelope licked closed by your child, at room temperature in a dry, easily accessible place that is far away from heat

## What To Do If Your Child Is Missing

**It is important that you act immediately, because if a murder is to be committed it typically happens within the first 3 hours after abduction.<sup>3</sup>**

- ① **Search** your home and check with relatives, neighbors, and friends to try and locate your child
- ② If you cannot find your child, immediately **report** your child missing to your local law-enforcement officers
- ③ **Limit** access to your home until law-enforcement officers arrive and are able to collect evidence<sup>4</sup>
- ④ **Give** law-enforcement officers all the information they request about your child, and be sure to give them any information that could help in the search
- ⑤ **Request** that your child's name and identifying information be immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File
- ⑥ **Call** the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at **1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)** to find out what resources are available to you

These guidelines are adapted from the brochure *Just in Case...Parental guidelines in case your child might someday be missing*. Copyright © 1985 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth A. Hanfland, Robert D. Keppel, and Joseph G. Weis. *Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation: Executive Summary*. Olympia, Washington: Office of the Attorney General, State of Washington and U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, May 1997, page 3.

<sup>4</sup> Jeanne Phillips. "Dear Abby." *The Washington Post*. September, 23, 2003, page C11.